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War Food Administration

Office of Distribution

Midwest Region

E. O. Pollock, Regional Director - - - - - 5 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

GREETINGS!...to all division chiefs, heads of field offices, section chiefs and unit heads in the eleven states. I should like to get around to talk to each one of you personally about your problems on the job. Instead, I am asking the Midwest Personnel Division to help me correspond with you at least once a month on various phases of the supervisor's job...I hope that you will make this your publication by sending in problems of supervision for the ROUND TABLE column, as well as by reviewing carefully the topics presented for your consideration. Let us hear from you.....

E. O. Pollock

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOURSELF ON SUPERVISION? Every time rating season rolls around, some employees would like to rate their chiefs. This is not a bad idea--and has been proposed and used in some agencies. We believe that each supervisor should have a crack at rating himself first...And let's give ourselves plenty of time to improve. Here is a check-list:

1. Do I train ALL employees under my immediate supervision? Yes No
2. Do I know the best up-to-date and time-saving methods of training? Yes No
3. Do I use the employee's mistakes as an opportunity to train him? Yes No
4. Do I spend some time with EVERY employee daily in order to know him and his work problems? Yes No
5. Do I take time out to "break in" new employees myself? Yes No
6. Do I review and check the work of my subordinates continuously? Yes No
7. Do I analyze each operation to see whether it is necessary and whether it is being done in the simplest possible way? Yes No
8. Do I listen to personal problems and try to adjust petty grievances? Yes No
9. Do I treat ALL of my subordinates alike? Yes No
10. Do I share all possible information with my employees on changes in the work situation, plans for reorganization, expected production quotas and the like? Yes No
11. Do I try to show each employee the importance of his job in relation to the whole program of the agency? Yes No

12. Do I give leadership by setting an example in all my conduct? Yes No

Now, let's see WHAT the SCORE IS:

12xYes = SEVEN-DAY WONDER

11xYes = A SUPER-DUPER

(wish we had more of 'em)

10xYes = A PRETTY GOOD GUY

Anybody scoring under 10xYes does not, of course, exist in the Midwest Region. But even with a score of 10 there is still room for improvement.

ALPHABET QUIZ: JIT, JRT AND JMT

How many supervisors know the alphabet as it relates to training?

The Training-Within-Industry division of the War Manpower Commission has developed a set of supervisory training courses called the "J-Series."

JIT, Job Instruction Training, teaches supervisors common-sense, simple and time-tested method of training individual workers on the job.

JRT, or Job Relations Training, deals with the steps in handling all types of personnel problems or problems in which human relationships are involved.

JMT, or Job Methods Training, gives supervisors training in the improvement of work methods and procedures to eliminate waste motion and use manpower most effectively.

All three courses are set up for 10 hours of training (usually 2 hours a day) for supervisors. The J-Series INSTITUTES are set up for 40 hours for the purpose of teaching instructors to teach the 10-hour courses.

A JIT course was conducted in the Regional Office in January for 24 section supervisors. This course may be extended later to other supervisors. A JRT Institute is scheduled for May. More on this later.

THE ROUND TABLE

From time to time the characters, known as discussants, will change, depending on the topic. Any resemblances to specific individuals in the Office of Distribution is not intended, --except for the Regional Director. Resemblances to employees and supervisors in general are decidedly intentional.

TOPIC: SHOULD SUPERVISORS DO ANY WORK?

Discussants (in order of appearance):

A. Summary.....Chairman

E. O. Pollock.....Himself

Joe Blow.....A pre-war employee

Miss Newcomer.....A new employee

Ed Super.....A supervisor

Bill Duper.....Another supervisor

CHAIRMAN: Welcome to our first session of the Round Table! The topic of the day is: "Should Supervisors Do Any Work?"

...Sounds like a joke.....

POLLOCK: It's not a joke. I sent in this topic myself. What I want to get at is this: how much of the actual work of his subordinates does the supervisor do?

CHAIRMAN: Yes...and we invited Mr. Blow and Miss Newcomer to get their slant on it. Joe, what do you think of a chief who doesn't pitch in and help you out each day?

JOE BLOW: Well, I can't say, because my chief is a very busy guy. He is always doing our work. When a fellow messes up a job, the chief usually takes over.

CHAIRMAN: Does he do your work sometimes?

JOE BLOW: No. I've been on my present job for over a year now and I don't need help. He helps the new fellows.

CHAIRMAN: Miss Newcomer, you have been with us a little over a month. Does your supervisor help you by doing some of the work?

MISS NEWCOMER: Well, when I get stuck, one of my fellow-workers tells me what to do.

CHAIRMAN: Don't you ever tell your supervisor when you get in a jam?

MISS NEWCOMER: I did at first, but she didn't seem to like it. She is awfully busy, you know, and I hated to bother her. She usually told me to see Miss Blodgett or Miss Pudgett.

CHAIRMAN: Who are they?

MISS NEWCOMER: They are older workers who have been on the job a long time.

POLLOCK: And how are you doing now?

Do you think that your work is good?

MISS NEWCOMER: I don't know. I guess so. Nobody has ever told me it's good or bad.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Miss Newcomer and Mr. Blow. We are now going to ask our

supervisory representatives, Mr. Super and Mr. Duper what they think. Mr. Super, how much of the work of your employees do you think you ought to do?

SUPER: You've got me, brother. I've lived through five reorganizations and six bosses and each one of them had a different idea. Some thought I ought to pitch in and do the work and others

thought I should be a kind of floorwalker.

DUPER: This may seem startling, but I belong to the school of thought that says the supervisor should not do any work that his employees do.

POLLOCK: You mean -- read the paper and keep his feet on the desk?

DUPER: No, I mean a supervisor should supervise.

POLLOCK: A revolutionary idea. But let's look into it at the risk of being considered radical. Duper, what do you mean by supervision?

DUPER: In my opinion, a supervisor plans the work, interprets orders, determines the best procedures, assigns duties, checks the work, trains his workers, knows all his workers and keeps harmony among them. In some jobs he may keep records of quantity and quality.

POLLOCK: What does he do with his spare time?

DUPER: (Deep, satiric laughter) Well, if he has any, he then pitches in and helps on the job.

CHAIRMAN: I'd like to read you a definition of a STRAW BOSS--from the U. S. Occupational Dictionary; it says,

"STRAW BOSS--a term applied to a worker who takes the lead in a team or gang, performing all the duties the other workers do; his supervisory functions are incidental to the production duties."

SUPER: Gee, I guess I've been straw boss now and then.

POLLOCK: That line about leadership in the STRAW BOSS definition is all right, though. That's one thing Duper left out.

CHAIRMAN: Otherwise, do you agree with him?

POLLOCK: Yes, let's accept Duper's point of view but add to it that a supervisor is a leader in any team he works with.....